

Executive Registry
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C E N T R A L I N T E L L I G E N C E A G E N C Y
MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP

18 November 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Executive Director-Comptroller

SUBJECT : The Agency's Image

1. In mid-May the Director asked the MAG to review the Agency's image and to inform him through you of our findings and recommendations. Since that time we have interviewed a number of agency officials about this matter, and have spent additional time in discussion and review among ourselves. Our major conclusion is, perhaps, too obvious: that the Agency's image is determined mainly by the quality of its work. No amount of public relations can hide or offset the damage done our reputation by poor analysis, sloppy operations, or other forms of ineptitude. This study does not specifically address the problem of achieving excellence.. Rather it concentrates on communication.

2. In the main, our discussions have revealed a balance sheet with regard to the Agency's image. Due largely to the emergence of new values among the young, and to some extent within the general public, our share of professionals drawn from the nation's colleges is significantly reduced, and our recruiters operate almost in stealth around campus fringes. The fact that there is so little information about either the intelligence profession or CIA available to the public gives the moderate person little knowledge against which to evaluate the sensational charges sometimes made against us. There is

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3. The balance sheet is not all red ink, however. We understand that at present our relations with Congress and the White House are sound. Recent efforts by the media to involve the Agency in "hot" press issues have had short-term impact, at most. The monthly flow of unsolicited professional applicants for employment greatly exceeds our hiring capacity.

4. We recognize that present policy is aimed at keeping the CIA profile as low as possible, and that our public relations posture is fundamentally defensive. We endorse this policy as preferable to an all-out public relations offensive. Yet, we believe that it would be both prudent and possible to build greater public knowledge and acceptance of the intelligence profession and of CIA's role in the government through a program of "institutional advertising". If such a course were adopted it might provoke some public reaction (especially media reaction), but within broad limits such a response should be tolerated rather than feared.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. We believe that the Agency's image would be aided by two kinds of publications. The first, a general statement which described how the CIA fits into the spectrum of government activities, would include a brief history of the events which caused CIA to be created, an analytical/reporting statement of the laws governing our activities, a description of our relationship to other intelligence agencies, and documentation about the strict controls placed upon our activities by both the legislative and executive branches of government. This study would be an inexpensive reference work for distribution by the Government Printing Office to libraries, scholars, or the curious public. The second publication we suggest is an authoritative study of the Intelligence Community. This

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work should be written by a scholar doing independent research for an organization such as the Brookings Institution. It could be a book, a monograph, or a chapter in a textbook.

B. It would be most helpful if the PFIAB would make an annual, low key public report about the intelligence community as a whole, with occasional more detailed reports on the various components.

C. The PFIAB should encourage the Smithsonian Institution to develop an "Intelligence Exhibit" which traces the role of intelligence from the Revolution to the satellite. It should be a broadly focused exhibit which also portrays the gathering of data by businesses, banks, and scholars in order that they can function more effectively and act more wisely. A short film in conjunction with such an exhibit would be an effective way to use the motion picture medium. Beyond suggesting this project and giving limited research support, the hand of the intelligence community should not be visible.

D. Encourage selected Agency retirees to write articles about their experiences for high quality magazines and journals. Topics might include the ways in which information and analysis were used at times of great national tension, a description of the demands and deadlines faced by the various offices, or our role as a "think tank". Some articles from past issues of Studies in Intelligence should be considered for general release.

E. Encourage employees who are not under cover to attend meetings of professional societies without even informally trying to hide their place of employment. In the same vein, we recommend wider contact between Agency scholars and those outside through Agency-sponsored conferences on special subjects. And we believe that broader substantive exchanges with members of the business community -- both in the US and with US company officials overseas -- would be beneficial to both participants.

F. The Agency's summer intern program should be continued, with even greater emphasis upon its good management. Interns should have broad exposure to CIA's best work.

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G. Increase the distribution of clearly identified Agency reference materials which are unique. Map folios have been well received by schools and scholars, and we should make available other fruits of our research such as basic economic analysis on selected areas.

H. Continue to deal with the press through background briefings when appropriate. Encourage press analysts to exchange their views and insights on a wide variety of subjects with us, perhaps in a manner similar to OTR's recent presentation of Richard Scammon and other outside speakers.

I. Develop substantive seminars about CIA's role in the government for representatives of other agencies with whom we deal in the field. Promote the idea that we all work for the same government, with ultimate direction from the same set of superiors.

J. Internally, continue the State of the Agency address, widening its effect by producing a transcript for the perusal of employees who cannot attend. Encourage more open intradirectorate communication in the mode of the State of the Agency address, so that employees will be able to see, hear, and query their deputy directors on matters important mainly to their own components. Whenever possible, encourage the members of the top management to make some contact with their employees in the areas where they actually work. A Deputy Director should be known as a person, not as a designator on an office door.

K. Finally, the DCI is a public figure and should have at least occasional structured exposure outside the White House and the committees of Congress. We are confident that he would be well received at an occasional prestigious speaking engagement or in a television interview conducted by a sophisticated journalist. Allen Dulles' hour on television was a distinct plus for the intelligence profession, we believe, in its philosophical tour d'horison.

THE MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP

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12 March 1971

MEMORANDUM TO: Mr. Gordon Stewart, IC
✓ Mr. Hugh Cunningham, D/OTR

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Mr. Richard Lehman, D/OCI
The Management Advisory Group

SUBJECT: An Informal Junior Officers' Study Group

1. With a firm commitment to creative careers in the CIA, we are in the early stages of constituting an informal junior officers' study group to discuss broad topics of common concern. Our idea was spontaneous, but we have decided to announce our intentions only after considerable thought.

2. We are motivated principally by the desire to engage in and encourage wider dialogue within the CIA. We begin this as a learning and sharing process, not with answers prepared, but with a dynamic interest in joining with as many professionals as possible in constructive, candid talk about the nature and future of the CIA. We favor greater communication within Agency components at all levels. We are concerned with the discrepancy in the public eye between the CIA's image and its actual role in government. We are interested in both substantive and administrative questions.

3. In the immediate future, we plan to invite some additional junior officers from the various directorates to join us in regular discussion groups. We do not plan to publicize our activities, and we are not certain what level of participation can be sustained. If sufficient interest is generated, we would be anxious to expand our study sessions and seminars to include interested officers from all levels.

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4. Our hope is to generate ideas and dialogue -- not controversy. We believe that with the cooperation of Agency management our study group will provide positive new perspectives on important issues. At the very least, conscientious and committed young officers will be able to come together (with full appreciation of security considerations) and to discuss problems common to their unique and exciting profession.

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